

WE-News

A publication of the
Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
April 2004

Welcome to the first edition of WE-News!

We hope you will find this electronic newsletter a convenient way to keep updated on activities at the Department of Workforce Education (DWE). *WE-News* replaces the agency's print newsletter, *Workforce Connections* and is produced by Workforce Education's Communications Office.

To read the newsletter, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have Acrobat Reader, it's free, and you can download it [here](#). All articles are best viewed at 100 percent and contain helpful links.

If you would like to continue receiving *WE-News*, please reply by e-mail to Marie Bruno, Communications Manager, at marie.bruno@arkansas.gov

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IN THIS ISSUE

STATE EDUCATION UPDATE

The fate of the state of Arkansas' educational system continues in a holding pattern.

In January, the Arkansas Supreme Court named two special masters to review what has been done by the Governor and the legislature to comply with the court's [2002 order](#) to provide an adequate and equitable education to all Arkansas children. The order gave a January 1, 2004, deadline for compliance.

In addition to action taken during the 2003 regular session, the legislature convened last December 8 in what would become a record-setting 61-day special session, taking the lawmakers beyond the court's January 1 deadline.

For many months preceding the session, [Governor Huckabee](#), [the directors of the three state education agencies](#), lawmakers, and many others worked to develop proposals that would meet the court's mandate.

When the special masters were appointed in February, the Supreme Court justices gave them 10 questions to research in order to determine if compliance was achieved. On April 2, the masters released a [report](#) of their findings. Parties have until April 22 to file written objections to the findings. It is unclear as to when the Supreme Court will have a final ruling on whether or not the state has complied with the court's 2002 order.

SPECIAL SESSION RECAP

[A number of laws](#) affecting the DWE's programs and services were enacted during the special session. Most notable were [Act 30](#), which provides funding for the Arkansas Technical Careers Student Loan Forgiveness Program; [Act 13](#), which establishes six positions for the DWE to assist the Department of Education in meeting the requirements of Act 1467 of 2003, the [Omnibus Quality Education Act](#); and [Act 59](#), which allows an appropriation of \$3,250 per full-time student enrolled in a secondary area vocational center. This action recognizes that to provide high-quality career and technical education programs, funding is essential for modern equipment and other materials.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION REPORT CARDS FOR 2002-2003 RELEASED – Student success and accountability are two of the Department of Workforce Education's Career and Technical Education Section's goals for career and technical education programs in all school districts. Find out how your school district measures up. ([More](#))

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK ARE WORKING BETTER BECAUSE OF COUNSELORS – Counselors, teachers, and administrators from the state's 23 *High Schools That Work* sites are taking on a major initiative this year to strengthen and support the role of the counselor in student success. ([More](#))

NO MORE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS? – This is what the national Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program is striving to achieve. Since the implementation of the Arkansas JAG program in 2000, dozens of students identified as potential dropouts have successfully graduated and pursued postsecondary education and/or work. Governor Mike Huckabee, as a new member of the national Jobs for America's Graduates Board of Directors, is working with DWE staff and other agencies to make JAG possible for even more at-risk students. ([More](#))

KUDER PARTNERSHIP – Through a partnership between the three state education agencies and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, Arkansas has also become the first state to provide all students access to an electronic career portfolio. They can create it as early as junior high and keep it for the rest of their lives. At the same time, the state can forecast career interests and build education and training opportunities based on the data. ([More](#))

NIPPING DEBT IN THE BUD – Students just out of high school who are taking advantage of enticing credit card offers and other similar opportunities are suddenly finding themselves in debt. Teaching students how to make borrowing and investing work for them *before* they enter the real world is the goal of the "Arkansas *Money Smart* Regional Alliance Partnership," hailed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) as the first of its kind in the country. Representatives of the

FDIC, Workforce Education, and other partners were on hand to sign the agreement at the state capitol. ([More](#))

DWE AND GLOBAL SOFTWARE GIANT PARTNER WITH ARKANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS – The Oracle Corporation's Internet Academy program will be launched in Arkansas high schools this fall – and the state's largest data technology company hopes students will pursue postsecondary technology degrees at home and stay home to work. ([More](#))

SPACE CUISINE – Believe it or not, there's a lot to be learned from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) food labs. A group of Arkansas Family and Consumer Sciences professionals traveled recently to the Johnson Space Center in Houston with the support of the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium to see for themselves. ([More](#))

ANNUAL ADULT EDUCATION EVENTS – 2003 marked the year for the third annual [ESL Institute](#) and the [30th anniversary of the Arkansas Association of Continuing and Adult Education](#).

STATE BOARD OF WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES HONORS WORKFORCE EDUCATION "PIONEERS" – The board's third annual "Pioneer Awards" were presented to 51 Arkansans who have worked to pilot new secondary career and technical education programs during the 2002-2003 school year. ([More](#))

OTHER RECENT ACTION BY THE STATE BOARD

ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES ALSO PRESENTS HONORS – Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities said thank you to employers and individuals for their ongoing commitment to putting Arkansans with disabilities to work. ([More](#))

FEDERAL SURPLUS PROPERTY AGENCY NEWS – You never know what you'll find at Federal Surplus Property (FSP). Here's what FSP has done for Washington County, plus a couple of "insider" items. ([More](#))

PROCLAMATIONS – Adult education and family and consumer sciences initiatives receive proclamations from Governor Huckabee. ([More](#))

DWE SCRAPBOOK

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